

## Home Group Leaders Discussion Guide

### Advent Week 4—Love: Waiting as we Learn to Expect the Unexpected

*“God works in mysterious ways.”* While we all know this, that doesn’t change the fact that we, in fact, do have expectations of Him that we expect Him to fulfill. *“God’s ways are not our ways.”* Again, we acknowledge this...yet one of the chief ways we want/expect things is NOW, and God typically says WAIT. And when God says “wait” it’s usually not a few minutes, days, or even weeks...it’s more like decades, even centuries.

Consider some “waiting periods” that we observe in Scripture...

- God told Abram that He would make him into a great nation...but it was 25 years later until Isaac was born.
- The Israelites were in slavery in Egypt, waiting for God to deliver them, for about 400 years.
- The Israelites had to wander in the desert for 40 years before they could enter the Promised Land.
- David was anointed by Samuel as the next king of Israel...but it would be about 10 years until David ascended to the throne.
- Many of the Messianic prophesies we read about in the prophets (like this past Sunday’s passage in Micah 5) took 700 some odd years to be fulfilled.
- And, of course, we’ve been waiting for roughly 2000 years for Jesus to return.

Apparently, us waiting is not nearly the issue to God that it is to us. As Peter reminds us, *“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.”* (II Peter 3:8...and the context is one of waiting...more on this next Sunday—just a little preview for you☺) Trusting that God is good and wise and loving, we must assume that this waiting is beneficial for us...and not just for us, but for everyone concerned. And so, we wait...

Advent is a season of waiting...with patience, with hope, sometimes with lament and sorrow, other times with joy and peace...but always waiting. If you think about it, the Christian life really is a perpetual Advent.

The reality is we might (likely will) die waiting.

Historically, we see that when God acts it’s always in ways we would never have expected or imagined.

- Old people having a child well beyond their years...
- A virgin having a baby...
- God becoming human...
- God dying a criminal’s death...
- Coming back from the dead...

I mean, who saw any of this coming? It’s crazy! And worth the wait...

- Q. If we think back through Scripture at all the times people waited on God we see that they all had their bouts with doubt, discouragement, whining...especially when things were tough or seemed bleak. As personally as you're willing to share, how has the experience of waiting affected you? What have you waited for...or what are you waiting for? How have you found encouragement in the waiting? What is particularly discouraging for you in the waiting?**
- Q. How has waiting caused you to question God's love and goodness and faithfulness?**
- Q. What positive benefits have you seen or experienced from waiting?**
- Q. Waiting on God challenges us because (beyond the fact that we're impatient) it goes against the conventional wisdom to act, to find a solution, to fix the issue/problem. We are doers. But God invites us to wait and allow Him to act (sometime with our cooperation, sometimes without it). For example, if an army is ramping up against you, marshal any allies you can to come to your defense. (This was something the Israelites often did, and God chastised them for it.) How are you/we tempted to find a solution to whatever problem you're/we're facing instead of waiting to allow God to come through on your/our behalf? (Or perhaps in a less wordy way: how do you struggle between being "responsible" and being trusting?)**
- Q. God likes to choose the most unlikely people, places, and things to accomplish His purposes. Together, list as many examples as you can. Since this is how God operates, why do we spend so much time and energy trying to be "significant"? Can you offer any examples of how you do this?**